

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
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Fort Defiance High School students win State Environmental Honors



Fort Defiance High School students are taking a close look at Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate as they compete in the State Envirothon Competition. Envirothon combines in-class study with hands-on field experiences, examining the role people play in environmental issues.

Envirothon is a natural resources competition for high school students. Envirothon promotes a desire for students to learn more about the natural environment and the stewardship of our natural resources. Teams of five students compete in the areas of soils, forestry, aquatics, and wildlife. Kate Abshire, Ryan Bugas, Ali Fitzgerald, Whitney Hawkins, Bob Michaels, Greg Wright and Coaches Brent Hull and Eric Stogdale make up the Fort Defiance Envirothon Team. The students have been studying Water Stewardship in a Changing Climate in the Headwaters SWCD to identify potential and/or existing environmental problems. During the oral presentation component of the competition, teams are given the opportunity to propose a management solution to a panel of judges. (The panel consists of industry and natural resource professionals.)

On April 19th, at the Area I Envirothon, the team qualified to advance to the state competition. The Headwaters SWCD sponsored the team. The Virginia Envirothon was held May 14-15, 2006 at the Northern Virginia 4H Education Center in Front Royal, where seventeen teams competed. The Fort Defiance Team placed first overall and as the state champions will represent Virginia at the Canon Envirothon to be held at the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on July 23-29, 2006. This will be the second consecutive year Fort Defiance will be representing Virginia. Last year the team placed second in the Nation and each team member received a \$ 4,000 college scholarship.

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Holston High School will also represent Virginia and the Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District at the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, October 25-28, 2006.

Envirothon is sponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Virginia's 47 Soil and Water Conservation Districts with funding provided by the Virginia Manufacturers Association Outreach Group, Philip Morris, The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, Virginia Chapter of Soil and Water Conservation Society, Virginia Chapter Izaak Walton League, Virginia Chapter of the American Fisheries Society and the Canon Envirothon.

The Envirothon is also looking for businesses or individuals to help sponsor students for next year's Virginia Envirothon. If you can help or would like to know more about starting an Envirothon team at your high school, through 4-H, FFA, Ecology Club or home school groups, contact the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts at (804) 559-0324 or dana.roberts@vaswcd.org or <http://www.vaswcd.org/envirothon.htm>

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